THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) India is ranked, in terms of Government spending, as 153rd amongst 160 countries studied by the World Tourism and Travel Council.

(b) The tourist arrivals to India during the year 2000 were 2.64 million.

(c) The Conference of Chief Ministers and State Tourism Ministers was convened to discuss and obtain the views of the State/UT Governments on draft National Tourism Policy, restructuring the Central financial assistance guidelines, unformity and rationalisation of State Government taxes on tourism units, providing a constitutional status to tourism and product development and marketing. The Government's decision to constitute a Tourism Advisory Council at national level which would facilitate interaction amongst the various stakeholders in the tourism sector was announced in the Conference.

Development of tourism in Assam

581. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to develop tourism in some areas of Assam with the foreign assistance; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Tourism Projects of Andhra Pradesh

582. DR. DASARINARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prioritised any tourism projects of Andhra Pradesh in consultation with the State Government for the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the current status of these projects; and

(d) whether Government propose to take any steps to promote tourism in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 21 projects have been prioritised for Central financial assistance of Rs. 661.65 lakhs during the year 2001-2002.

(c) Out of 21 projects prioritised, 17 proposals so far have been received from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. Three projects for Rs. 36.60 lakhs have been approved. The remaining projects are at various stages of process.

(d) The Government is attracting foreign as well as domestic tourists by promoting India including the State of Andhra Pradesh through its 18 overseas and 21 domestic offices by advertising in print and electronic media, participations in travel fairs, inviting media, and Travel Agents on fam trip and extensive use of IT in tourism promotion.

Indian's share in global tourist traffic

583. SHRIMATI VANG A GEETHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) India's share in global tourist traffic;

(b) whether it is a fact that this share is very marginal;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of the steps being taken by Government to make tourism sector more attractive and sound?

THE MINISTEROF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) At present India's share of foreign tourist arrivals in the world's arrivals is 0.38 per cent.

(c) and (d) Special efforts are needed to increase India's share in the world tourist traffic. A new Tourism Policy is in the offing. It would be finalised before the year end. Our Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, in his Independence Day message on August 15, 2001, had declared: "Tourism is a big source of employment generation and foreign exchange earning. Indeed, it is the fastest growing industry in the world today. To achieve this end, we shall unveil a progressive National Tourism Policy before the end of this year."